

Bottom of the order sparks Cougars to Quarterfinals & rematch against Orange Lutheran:

| | R: | H: | E: |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----|----|
| Vista Murrieta (21-8 Overall): | 0-0-0-0-0-0-0=0 | 1 | 0 |
| Norco (27-1 Overall): | 0-0-0-2-0-3-X=5 | 10 | 0 |

By: Derryl Trujillo
Inland Sports Senior Writer

Norco, CA (Norco HS)-

After a fourteen day layoff from competition the Norco High School softball team was ready to begin their postseason journey in 2019. Allison Beecher during that layoff had dreams about taking the field Tuesday afternoon in their CIF-SS division one second round game against Vista Murrieta. If in those dreams she went 3-3 with two RBI against Broncos starting pitcher Briza Blanco en route to a 5-0 win then reality and fantasy matched. Norco moves onto Thursday's quarterfinals where they will play Orange Lutheran at home for a 3rd time.

With their first time thru the order on Tuesday afternoon Norco was able to collect just three hits (all singles) and had no runs to show for it. Things began to click for the Cougars in their half of fourth as Kyleigh Sand singled and advanced to second base on a wild pitch. Katelyn Olson's single scored the game's first run making it 1-0 Cougars with no outs. After a groundout & strikeout Beecher had her first RBI with a single to right field but was called out for leaving early on an attempted steal finishing the frame.

After the win Beecher remarked "It was a really good thing to have those days off leading into this game. We were able to work on quite a few things at practice and overall just went back to basics. Actually at school today I was really anxious to get out here and play after having that bye even having multiple dreams about this game. We know the target is on our backs as a number one seed and this was a great way to get started."

Kinzie Hansen led off the Norco fifth inning with a single just down the first base line. Paige Smith hit a sacrifice fly to right field which scored Hansen and put the Cougars up 2-0.

Norco struck for two more runs in their half of the sixth making it 5-0. Beecher & Willis had RBI singles scoring Regan Cheyne (single) & Beecher respectively.

In the Broncos seventh Willis recorded back to back strikeouts and a leadoff walk was erased as Hansen caught Aly Montesino stealing second base.

Vista Murrieta's only hit of the day was a fifth inning single by Zoe Karam to right field.

Willis said afterwards "This was a good start to our postseason after not being on form recently. We were actually working on getting ground ball & fly ball outs today against their lineup. Any team can come back from three runs down so our mindset was just to get into the dugout as fast as we could until there were twenty one outs."

Cougars coach Rick Robinson remarked after the win "That week of practice was just what we needed coming into the postseason. With runners on that first time around we were chasing some pitches out of the zone so we had to make an adjustment in the box. Hitting is contagious and once the bottom of our order figured her out it carried over to everyone else."

Broncos Notables:

LP: Briza Blanco CG, 5 Runs, 10 Hits, 2 K's, 2 BB

Zoe Karam>>5th inning single broke up the no hitter

Cougar Notables:

WP: Sarah Willis CG, 0 Runs, 1 Hit, 8 K's

At the plate>>2-4

Allison Beecher>>3-3 with 2 RBI